

## 2 Corinthians

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 01 January 1900

Preacher: Obbard, David (1922 - 2011)

[ 0 : 00 ]     2 Corinthians 5, verses 14 and 15.

2 Corinthians 5, verses 14 and 15.

The Apostle Paul here is telling us why he had such a zeal for preaching the gospel and why he indeed became an ambassador.

He tells us why it is that he could be beside himself in the enthusiasm and in the way in which he would put everything aside but the gospel.

He could be full of the love of Christ. He could be transported by it. And the world would say he is beside himself.

[ 1 : 38 ]     In fact, that is indeed what was it Festus said to him. Paul, thou art beside thyself. Much learning has made thee mad.

Because he believed the gospel. Because the love of Christ was in him. Indeed, the hymn we have been singing, I'm sure, would have been his prayer and was fulfilled in him.

But the world said he's mad. They said it about the saviour. Or if, on the other hand, he was, as he said, knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, if he put forward the sober aspects of the gospel, if he warned men of their sin, well then they would say he is a miserable, doom-pronouncing man.

And Paul says, now whatever it is, whether we are beside ourselves, it is to God, or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. For the love of Christ constraineth us.

It was the love of Christ in his heart that moved him to do all these things. Now, this word constrain, I like to look up the, usually the original meanings of words that I'm not quite sure about.

[ 3 : 05 ]     I looked up the original as we find it in the analytical concordance of the Bible, and I was really no better off. Because, this word is only used, the original word is only used five times in the New Testament, and each time it is translated differently.

I thought, well that seems strange. Why? So I looked it up in my dictionary. And my dictionary said two things about the word constrain. It says to hold back and to urge with power.

Again, that seems strange, doesn't it? That this word means to hold back, urge with power. So no wonder that when our translators came to this word, they translated it differently, according to the circumstance in which it was used, because it had such a wide meaning, from holding back to urging with power.

And then, as I pondered on it, I thought, well yes. Some of you know that I've been to Chichester quite often, have an interest in the chapel there.

And I was there for three Sundays in a row, when the flood was at its height. First Sunday we went, we had to go round through Bognor. We couldn't get along the road, it was full of water.

[ 4 : 34 ] The next Sunday, well, they had restrained it. And the sandbags holding it together. We came home through Singleton. And as I think now, I think to myself, well here's a perfect picture of what it means to restrain, to constrain.

Love of Christ constraineth us. Well you know what a flood is like? It spreads all over the fields, and it appears to be static. There it is, this tremendous flood at Singleton.

And they had sandbagged it, and held it back, and they had guided it, where they wanted it to go. And down through the middle of the road was a part of sandbag, too deep, that is too wide, and two and a half, three foot high.

And down one side of the road ran a stream. And it ran like a mill race. It really did. It was tremendous pace, going down the road. Half the road the cars were on, the other half, the water was going.

Now they had constrained the water. They had held it back. They had channeled it into a certain direction. And all that water, which would seem to be quite static, was now pouring down, urged with power.

[ 6 : 00 ] The channeling, the guiding, the holding back, bringing it together, brought out the power. And it was going just like a mill race. It's a thing which so amazed me.

And right down to Chichester, just the same, it was still going like a mill race toward the sea. Constrained, you see, in all the aspects of it.

And Paul says, the love of Christ constraineth us. One other thought about that river Levant. Now, it is what is known as a bourne.

And a bourne is described as an intermittent stream. But usually, there is always water flowing. Sometimes it flows through limestone rock.

Whence come places like Yoki Hop, the hole, and potholing, where the river has run through a channel in the rock.

[ 7 : 01 ] But at Levant, it's rather different. It runs through the shingle under the ground, gravel. So it's always running. All the year. But when the pressure gets great, it comes to the top.

And then it flows on the top. And there's a little lesson there because it reminded me, I thought of it, it's just like the work of the Holy Spirit, you know.

the Holy Spirit is always at work beneath. In the life of the believer, in the life of the church, Holy Spirit's at work now.

But it's like the Levant in the summer when it's dry. We don't see much of it. But there are times when just as the flood comes up and it overflows and that river runs with power, so does the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer and in the life of the church.

And that's one thing that we need to pray for. That that secret operation of the Holy Spirit that is continually going on should come to the surface and that God would bless us with revival.

[ 8 : 17 ] But to come back to our text, the love of Christ constraineth us. But let's first of all just spend a moment at all to think about the love of Christ.

The love of Christ and the love of God. It was the love, it was love that constrained God from destroying Adam and the world when man fell.

It was love. It was love that gave the law. The Apostle Paul tells us that he tells us what we should do and what we shouldn't other, else we shouldn't do, some of the things in the law.

And if there's anything else he said, remember that the keeping to love is to keep the law. God gave the law out of love. but most of all God love was manifested in that he provided a channel just as they constrained that river, that flood as it were and provided a channel for it to run in.

It is the love of God who provided the channel as we were thinking of this morning. And it was the love of Christ that constrained him to leave the glory of heaven, the worship of angels, to take upon him our nature.

[ 9 : 45 ] He took not upon him the nature of angels even, but he took upon him the seed of Abraham. It was love that constrained him to leave heaven and to come to this earth to be born in the most lowly conditions or positions that a babe could be born in, to live a humble lowly life, to work for his living and to go about doing good and living that life.

It was his love that constrained him to do all that. But most of all, because behind it all, was that he came to go to Calvary. God chose love to destroy the power of Satan and sin.

It was the love of Calvary. There is a power in love, in every aspect that we think of it, but here in the love of God and the love of Christ, it was love that constrained him to come to this world and die for sinners.

And it is still his love that works in the heart. It was that love which wrought in the heart of Paul, Saul of Tarsus as he was, and it constrained him.

The love of Christ constraineth us. Let's think back again of that which was held back. It means to hold back. Now how the love of Christ constrained the apostle Paul.

[ 11 : 24 ] to hold back, to not be self-indulgent. He gave himself completely to the ministry.

It was the love of Christ, it was that love and the knowledge of that love which enabled him to say, as we've been reading, I die daily that the life of Christ might be manifest in my mortal body.

love of Christ, the love of Christ that was in him and the love of Christ for him that enabled him to mortify the deeds of the body.

It was the love of Christ that constrained him to give up all for Christ's sake, for the gospel's sake. when we think he had the world at his feet, as we would say, it has been computed that the apostle Paul had one of the finest brains and intellects in the whole of mankind.

I forget exactly where they placed him and how they placed him, I don't know, but this is a statement that reading his epistles they have come to the conclusion that there was a tremendous mind.

[ 12 : 41 ] He was a Pharisee, he was a Jew, he was highly thought of, he was trained both at Tarsus in the Greek college and Jerusalem under Gamaliel, the finest of the Jewish teachers.

He was a man who had great opportunities and he gave it all up. And he said, and what things were gained to me, those I counted lost for Christ, that I might win Christ and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is by the faith of God, the righteousness of God by faith.

That is what Paul said. It was love that constrained him to do it. The love of Christ to him and the love in his heart that responded to that love of the Lord Jesus.

He would have said amen to what John said, we love him because he first loved us. it was the love of Christ that constrained him to give that all up.

And at the end of his days, the end of his days, when he was in prison at Rome, when he was facing possibly martyrdom, he was forsaken by those he taught in the gospel, he was despised by his family and his whole nation.

[ 14 : 06 ] only Mark with me, he said, only Luke with me, rather. Nevertheless, the Lord stood by me and he writes to Timothy and he says, I'm not ashamed, I'm not ashamed, I haven't been put to shame, the Lord is with me, that's all that matters.

He could look back and say, I have fought a good fight, I've finished my course, I've kept the faith, and there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me in that day, not only me, but all those that love is appearing.

Here's a man who wasn't ashamed to give up everything, wealth, honour, position, everything, for the love of Christ.

It constrained him, it channelled him, as it were, into the right direction, it drew his heart out, it was a constraining power, it was moving, it channelled him to follow Christ, just as we saw that great lake, which lay there, as it were, tranquil, being channelled into this little channel, and away it went, with the power, and it was the love of Christ that provided the apostle Paul with power, urged with power, is a dictionary, one dictionary definition of constraint, urged with power, and Paul was urged with power, because the love of Christ constrained him, how we do need that ourselves, I will run in the ways of his commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart, oh friends, what a difference it makes, when the

Lord enlarges our heart, with a sense of his love, then we run in the way of his commandments, then we find in his service, perfect freedom, the apostle Paul described himself as a bond slave of Christ, it is the love of Christ, you see, the love of Christ constraineth us, this love is the Greek word agape, and it really means, I believe, a love to the loveless, a love which has owed nothing to the object, because God is love, and the love of God is that love, when we love, whatever it is, whether it's something we eat, somebody say, I love chocolate, another person says, I love my wife,

[ 16 : 57 ] I do, but I loved her because I saw something in her that was lovely to me, it is always something that attracts our love, but the love of God was a love to that which was totally unattractive, love to the loveless shown, that they might lovely be, this is the love, this is the love, that constrained Paul, the love which loves the loveless, the love which is described in 1 Corinthians chapter 13, it's here in our own authorised version, it's translated charity, a very much misunderstood word, charity is love in action, true charity is always that, there can be a charity which is very grudging, there can be a charity which is despising, but there can be a charity, a giving, which comes from the love of the heart of someone to give, now this is the love that constrained

Paul, the love of Christ, is that love, it is love in action, and in what action, Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, and if you think of that passage in 1 Corinthians chapter 13, it describes in a sense our Lord Jesus Christ in the very words that we read, charity suffereth long, is kind, charity envieth not, charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not evilly provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, I just say that doesn't mean to say that it believes anything and everything, but it means that it always believes the best, and it always hopes the best, it always puts the best construction on what a person does, endureth all things, charity never faileth, and the love of

Christ, that love seen in the Lord Jesus Christ constrained Paul, constrained Saul of Tarsus, so he said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do, and the Lord told him what things he would suffer, do you remember, that's what he tells us, Ananias, God said to Ananias, I've told Saul of Tarsus, what things he's got to suffer for my sake, and the love of Christ constrained him, although he knew from that very fact that he'd got to suffer, such was the love of Christ to him, who'd saved him, sinner that he was, and that he willingly went, and as I've already said, when he came to the end, and as the world would say, his life had been wasted, all his talent had been wasted, he'd been despised by those who had been called by grace through his ministry, and yet for all that, he says,

I'm not ashamed, my God has been faithful, he's in the prison, and he writes and he says, what shall separate me from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or persecution, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Nay, he said, in all these things we are more than conquerors, for I am persuaded that neither life nor death, nor principalities, nor powers, nor angels, nor things present, nor things to come, nor anything in the whole of creation, can ever separate me from the love of Christ, which is in, love of God, which is in Christ Jesus.

[ 21 : 26 ] You see, it's this love, it constrained him, it guided him, it moulded his life, it restrained him, and it urged him with power, as he went forth into the ministry, preaching the gospel.

He says, I am Christ's bond slave. And I'm sure you are all aware, may I remind you if you are, may I tell you if you aren't, of the little story of the girl who was up for sale in one of the big American slave markets, a beautiful maiden, and she was being bid for by ugly and wicked men, and a gentleman was so taken by this innocent young girl and realising what a dreadful life she was going to be subject to, that he outbid all the others, and he outbid her and he bought her.

And she came to him and he said, but you can go free, you can go free. I bought you, but you can do just what you like, you can go free. She thought, how wonderful I can go free.

And she thought, what shall I do, where shall I go? I know what I'll do, I'll go and be his servant, I'll serve him. And that's what she did.

She was a bond slave, but she loved his service, it was a joy to her, and what blessing she had, what good would it have been if she'd been set free, and let go.

[ 23 : 04 ] And she would have got outside the slave market, and one of these wicked men would have caught her and put her back again. She found safety, she found blessing, she found everything she needed in the service of him who bought her with his money.

Now, says Paul, that's why I'm a bond slave. We were redeemed, says Peter, not with corruptible things such as silver and gold, but by the precious blood of Christ.

I, the love of Christ, says Paul, constrain me. O love that will not let me go, I yield my weary soul to thee, I give thee back the life I owe, that in thine ocean's depth its flow might richer, fuller be.

Think of that flood, there it lay static, useless, and yet you see it could be channeled, channeled into that little narrow passage down through the middle of Singleton and it was power in it.

It could have turned a mill, it could have turned a turbine and caused electricity and brought power because it was channeled in that way and so was the Apostle poor.

[ 24 : 31 ] He was channeled into the path of an Apostle and what great things God done with him and what great things he has done with so many who have been constrained by the love of Christ to thus judge that if one died for all then were all dead that they which live should not henceforth live to themselves but unto him which died for them and rose again.

We thus judge. This constraining love of Christ didn't make Paul just a simply fatalistic blind follower.

He judged. He came to a very sensible and reasonable conclusion. that if Christ had died for him then he was dead and he should now live for Christ.

It may be difficult to understand and I've turned open Romans chapter 6 because Paul tells us there in Romans chapter 6 where he's speaking about this very subject he says in verse 6 knowing this that our old man is crucified with him that the body of sin might be destroyed but hence forth we should not serve sin for he that is dead is freed from sin.

Now if we be dead with Christ we believe that we shall also live with him knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more death hath no more dominion over him for in that he died he died unto sin once in that he liveth he liveth unto God likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

[ 26 : 45 ] God he goes on to give us some very practical directions that we should not yield our bodies servants to sin now what does he mean when he says our old man is crucified with him when we all know that our old nature is very much alive Paul is saying this I believe my old man died at Christ at Calvary because my old man was my state in Adam we notice this morning that we we don't suffer for Adam's sin but we suffer from his sin we have inherited a sinful nature we have inherited a status we are the children of Adam but when we become believers we become the children of Christ and our old man is dead he's finished the old nature is still here so Paul says I am crucified with Christ

I was crucified with Christ at Calvary that's true for every believer but I am crucified with Christ because every day I have to crucify this old nature that I still have my old standing is gone that's finished Christ died for me I was under the law I was under condemnation to the law Christ died for me my substitute therefore I died he died for me it was Napoleon I believe who introduced conscription in the way in which we understand it today and he allowed that if a man could find a substitute for him that he that was permissible and there was a man who found a substitute for himself and his substitute died at Salerno and when things got bad the man was called up again he said no I died at

Salerno and it went right up to Napoleon Napoleon ruled that that man was right he could not be conscripted he had died at Salerno in that terrible great battle now that is the picture that Paul had grasped I died at Calvary he said to the law to sin I still have to deal with my old nature because I should carry that to the end and I I die daily did we not read it that the life of Christ might be manifested in me and it was the love of Christ that constrained him to do that we were singing were we not may the love of Jesus fill me as the waters fill the sea him exalting self abasing this is victory this is being urged on with power by the constraining love of Christ may the mind of

Christ my saviour live in me from day to day by his love and power controlling all I do and say I gave you a quotation from a book written by a Jew this morning and what he says about being constrained is Christ's love governs everything now isn't that a lovely phrase Christ's love governs everything governs my thoughts it governs my life it governs the direction in which I go it governs everything that's what Paul is saying I believe when he says the love of Christ constraineth us for he died therefore we died the law no longer has a claim on the believer Christ has met every demand of the law when he died at

Calvary's cross but Paul died daily in order to live to God we need to follow that same pathway and it is only the love of Christ that will really bring us to follow it as we ought to see that he died for me what were we singing on such love my soul still ponder love so great so rich so free say while lost in holy wonder why oh Lord such love to me he loved me says Paul he gave himself for me yes he gave himself for the church he loved the church and gave himself for it but Christ loved the church by loving each individual member that's how he loved the church not just en bloc but by loving each one and Paul said he loved me he gave himself for me and therefore

[ 32 : 06 ] I am dead nevertheless I live yet not I but the life which I live I live by the faith of Christ who loved me and gave himself for me he gave to the Ephesians a very wonderful prayer this is what he prayed for them what we should pray for ourselves that we might be strengthened with all might by his spirit in the inner man that Christ might dwell in our hearts by faith that we being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the length the breadth the depth the height and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge that we might be filled with the fullness of God that's the love of Christ constraining urging with power restricting selfish motives and yet giving freedom to run in the way of life the love of Christ constraineth me says Paul and that love can constrain and does still constrain so many today may it constrain us more the love of Christ constraineth us because we thus judge if one died for all then we're all dead and that he died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto him which died for them and rose again the apostle

Paul never stops at Calvary he takes us to Calvary and it's necessary to be taken to Calvary and if we want to know more of the love of Christ that is the place to rest but nevertheless Paul says and rose again he had a living saviour we've just quoted his prayer that Christ might live in our hearts he rose for our justification he rose to be glorified and to be given all power in heaven and earth and he's promised to be with us the love of Christ as Paul constraineth me and lives within us he rose to intercede for us above in every way we see the apostle Paul seeing our saviour magnified it was Christ first and Christ last for him and so Paul urges us as we noticed already he says he not only beseeches us for Christ's sake to be reconciled to God but he so often beseeches the believer says

I beseech you brethren by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice wholly acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service be not conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you might know what is that good and acceptable will of God here's the apostle you see now he himself had been constrained by the love of God the love of Christ and he's beseeching us to do the same God has had the one sacrifice the only sacrifice he needed to put away our sin he no longer wants a dead sacrifice but he wants a living sacrifice he wants us to live to him as Paul did and it's going to be a sacrifice I die daily that the life of Christ might be manifest in me

I beseech you brethren it is your reasonable service it's reasonable in the light of what we have here that if one died for all then we're all dead that's reasonable but the apostle means more than that he means with the whole of your reasonable service he was a bond slave yes but he wasn't just a blind slave no he saw with his old whole heart he followed the Lord with his old being and that is what we need the Holy Spirit to work in us that we also might be so constrained Jesus said if any man would follow me let him take up his cross daily and follow me if any man would serve me let him take up his cross daily and follow me and that doesn't mean bearing with your arthritis or whatever it is or the problems or whatever they may be that you call your crosses yes they are crosses but what the

Lord meant was this anyone living in that day who saw a man walking down through the streets of Jerusalem carrying a cross would know that that man was going out to Golgotha to die and he had never come back he was going to die he had taken up a cross he was going out to die and that really is what the Lord means take up your cross die to self it's a daily thing crucifixion is a long slow painful process it's a lifelong process for the believer now the Lord didn't hide this from Paul we noticed that I've shown him what things he will suffer we just mentioned was it this afternoon Peter and how he said Lord thou knowest all things thou knowest that I love thee and the Lord said to him well Peter you follow me and when you follow me

[ 38 : 18 ] I'll take you where you don't want to go you're going to die on the cross Peter he followed him for all that he followed him for all that see it was the love of Christ constrained him that Peter the self seeking one the one who wanted to be first was ready to follow the Lord and knowing that at the end of his days he was going to die on a cross in agony but the love of Christ constrained him may the love of Christ constrain us may we know something of that truth as expressed by that Jewish interpreter may the love of Christ govern everything Amen our closing hymn this

Lord's day is 95 and did the holy and the just the sovereign of the skies stoop down to wretchedness and thus that guilty worms might rise 95 be how took CHOIR SINGS

CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS  
CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS  
SINGS

CHOIR SINGS O blood returned, I am not for paper, sir, did I?

O Lord, take my heart as worthless heart, and may be holy, I am.

[ 42 : 35 ] O Lord, do make us truly sincere in that request, and can we not say, take my all, this willing heart, make it only thine.

And so may the grace of the Lord Jesus, the love of God, the communion and fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

Amen.